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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet offers a profile of the Puerto Rican community and other Latinos in New York City based on recent census statistics. Noting the continued low socioeconomic conditions of this population, the pamphlet also points out recent gains in political representation. A discussion of population changes from 1980 to 1990 in New York City discusses the additional complexity in the city's heterogeneity. A review of government response to these changes notes low percentages of Puerto Rican and other Latinos employed by the City and describes a set-aside program currently in implementation. A discussion of education issues notes that in 1990, Puerto Ricans made up 35 percent of public school enrollment. However, of persons 25 years of age and older, Puerto Ricans have the lowest proportion with a high school diploma. The pamphlet describes organizations that have become more aggressive nationally in responding to the high and persistent levels of Puerto Rican poverty such as the National Puerto Rican Coalition and the Aspira National Association. A discussion of their activities notes several interesting developments in New York City, among them the increased number of Puerto Rican municipal officials, Puerto Rican City Council members, and Puerto Rican congresspersons. Despite these and other developments, however, the continuing marginalization of this population remains a matter of grave concern and much remains to be done, particularly in linking local efforts across the region for mutual support and growth. (JB)

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Puerto Ricans and Other Latinos in New York City Today: A Statistical Profile

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This is an expanded version of a talk presented by Angelo Falcón, President and Founder of the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy, at a joint informational session of Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) *and the* New York Regional Association of Grantmakers (NYRAG) *entitled,* **Progress and Prospects in the Latino Community: Implications for Grantmaking**. *This meeting was held at the Rockefeller Foundation on June 10, 1992.*

About the
Institute for Puerto Rican Policy

The **Institute for Puerto Rican Policy** *is a nonprofit and nonpartisan policy center established in 1982 and based in New York City. The Institute is privately-funded and does not accept government grants. It analyzes and promotes the social policy needs of the Puerto Rican/Latino community in three major program areas:*

Urban Policy Analysis Program *through its NYC Project, NYC Latino Nonprofit Sector Study, and The Accountability Project*

Civic Participation Program *through its Electoral Analysis and Redistricting Projects, and the Latino National Political Survey (LNPS)*

Policy Networking Program *through its 1,500-member National Puerto Rican Policy Network, its National Puerto Rican Opinion Surveys, and its sponsorship of the Puerto Rican Research Exchange.*

Contributions to the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy are tax-deductible.

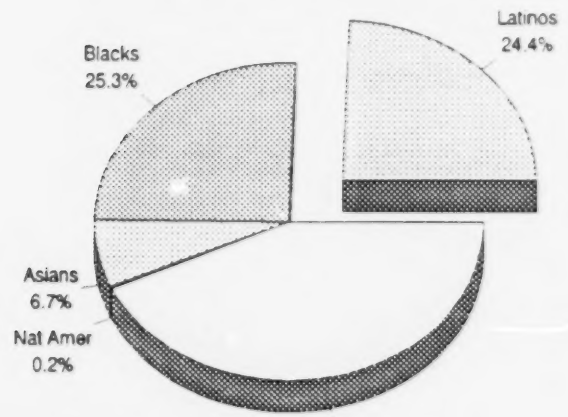
Socioeconomic conditions continue to deteriorate in Puerto Rican and other Latino communities, and the Puerto Rican community in particular remains among the poorest in the country. On the other hand, through the redistricting process, the Puerto Rican/Latino community has made significant progress increasing its political representation. This larger cadre of Latino elected officials becomes a potential tool through which to more effectively address the problem of Puerto Rican and other Latino persistent poverty in the public policy arena.

In 1991, the Census reported that the poverty rate for the 2.5 million Puerto Ricans in the United States was 41%. This was the highest poverty rate among Latino groups and higher than that of the African-American community. The percent of Puerto Rican families headed by single females was 43%, and 64% of those families lived in poverty. In addition, while those relatively few Puerto Ricans who had jobs seemed to be competing well with whites in terms of their earnings, this community exhibited the lowest labor force participation rate of any group. What emerges are the realities of an economically polarized community with a small middle class and a large mass of very poor people.

In New York City, the conditions of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos also put them at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. Latinos numbered close to two million in 1990, representing close to a quarter of the city's population. Between 1980 and 1990, Latinos and other racial minorities accounted for what growth there was in the city's total population, with Latinos growing from 1.4 to 1.8 million, while the number of whites decreased from 3.7 to 3.2 million in this same period.

Along with these growing numbers, the city's Latino population is introducing additional complexity to the

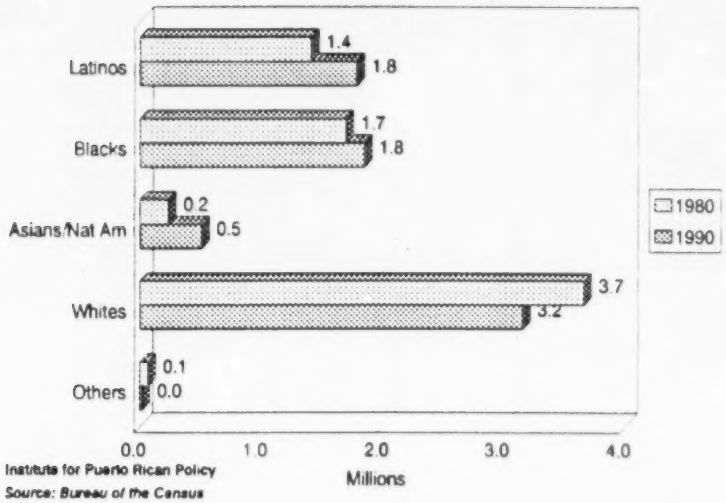
New York City, 1990
Racial-Ethnic Breakdown of Population
Total Population = 7,322,564



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Bureau of the Census

heterogeneity of New York. Latinos, for example, do not indentify neatly within the black-white racial dichotomy dominant in the United States: in 1990, the largest percent of Latinos in New York City, close to half (47%), responded to the Census question on race by checking off the "Other" category and rejecting the standard classification. In addition, among Latinos in New York City, the fastest-growing groups were non-Puerto Ricans. This resulted in Puerto Ricans, while growing in population, making up a

New York City Population Change 1980-90
by Racial-Ethnic Group



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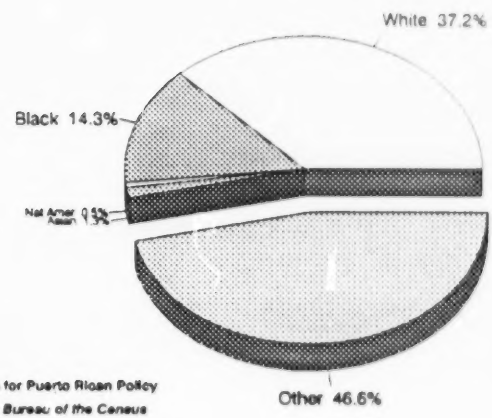
Source: Bureau of the Census

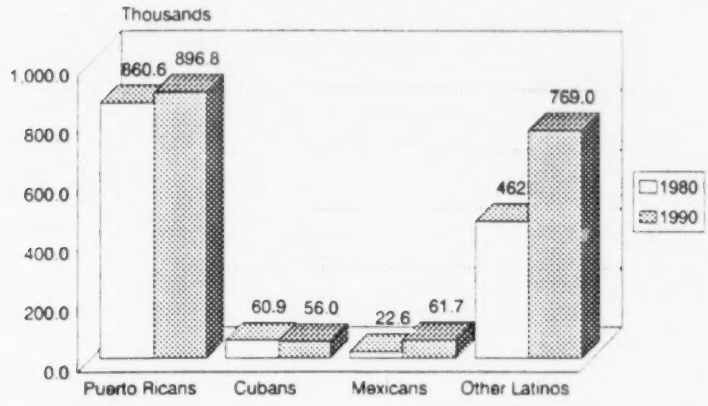
Racial Self-Identification of Latinos
New York City, 1990



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Bureau of the Census

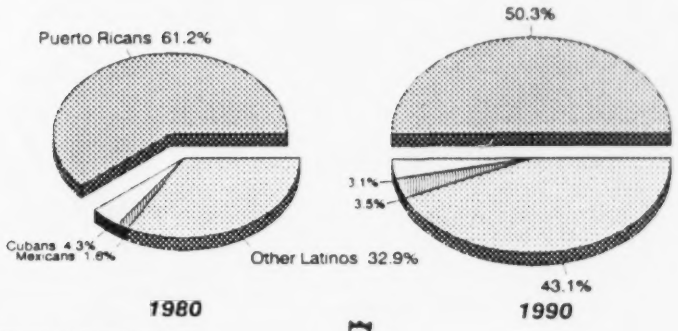
smaller share of the total population: from 61% to 50% of the total between 1980 and 1990. Groups such as Dominicans, Colombians and Mexicans made the greatest population gains. On the other hand, one of the traditionally larger Latino subgroups in the city, Cubans, actually declined in size during the 1980s. The dramatic growth in the total Latino population population has meant that in 1990, more than a fifth of New York City's population over five years of age reported speaking Spanish at home.

Latino Subgroup Population Changes 1980-90
New York City



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Bureau of the Census

Latino Subgroup Population Composition
New York City, 1980 & 1990

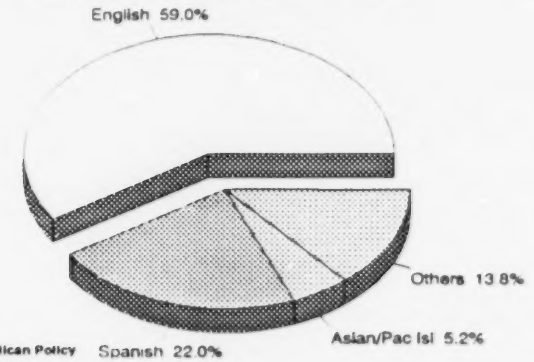


Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Bureau of the Census

However, the city's institutions have been slow in their responsiveness to the needs of the Puerto Rican/Latino population. As of February 1992, for example, Latinos only made up 12% of New York City government's work force. A recent report by the city government found that it underrepresented Latino-run nonprofit agencies in its contracting; in fiscal year 1992, the City of New York awarded only 5% of its total contracts to nonprofit agencies to Latino community-based organizations.

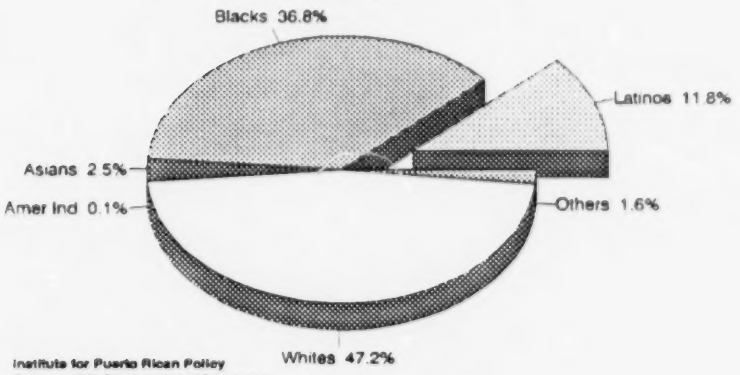
The city government is currently implementing a set-aside program to award 20% of its contracts to businesses to minorities and women. It did so after a study that found

Language Spoken at Home
New York City, 1990
Total Population 5 Years and Older = 6,820,456



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Bureau of the Census

New York City Government Work Force
Racial-Ethnic Breakdown, Feb. 12, 1992
Total Full Time Employees = 144,744

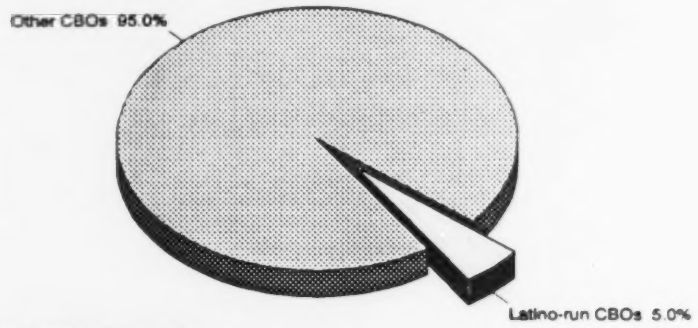


Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: NYC Department of Personnel

that these businesses were also being discriminated against by the city. In 1987, the Census found that there were close to 22,000 Latino-owned businesses in New York City, making the New York metropolitan area the one with the third largest concentration of Latino-owned businesses in the country. Puerto Ricans, the largest Latino population subgroup, however, owned less than a third of these businesses (32%) while being over 50% of the Latino population.

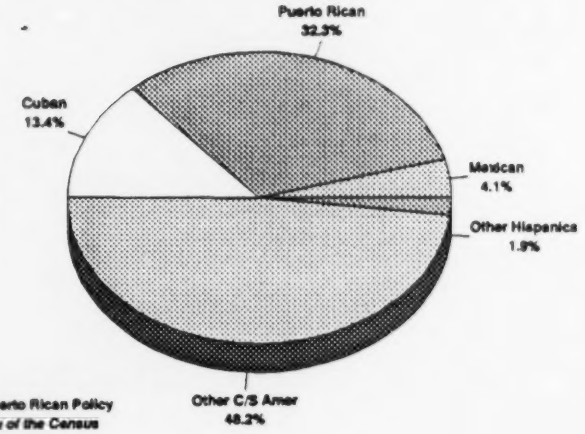
Education is usually pointed to as the long-term solution to the Puerto Rican/Latino community's socioeconomic

New York City Government Contract Dollars
to Latino Nonprofit Agencies, FY 1992
Total Contracts = $2,772,210,000



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: NYC Mayor's Office of Contracts

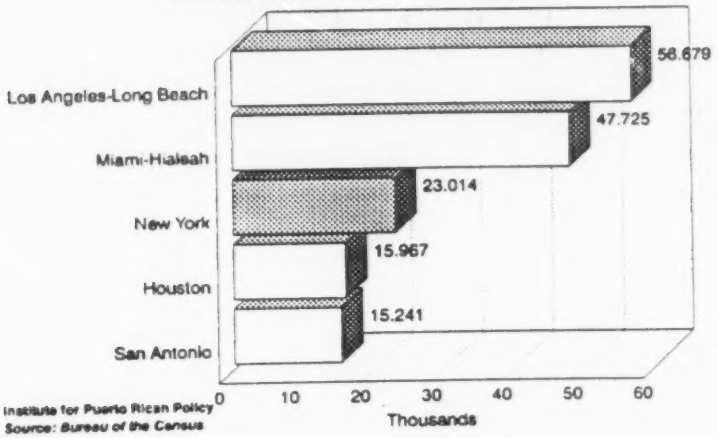
Latino-Owned Businesses
in New York Metro Area, 1987
Total Latino-Owned Firms = 21,787



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Bureau of the Census

problems. In 1990, Latinos made up 35% of the public school enrollment. The Latino share of public school enrollment has grown steadily since 1967, surpassing the percentage of white students in the late 1970s and projected to surpass the number of black students in the late 1990s. In the school system, the impact of the city population's growing diversity is dramatic: between 1989 and 1992, close to 120,000 foreign-born students entered the school system, with the largest group coming from the Dominican Republic. However, Latinos continue to exhibit the highest high school dropout rate in the public school system: in 1991, while making up 34% of the high school

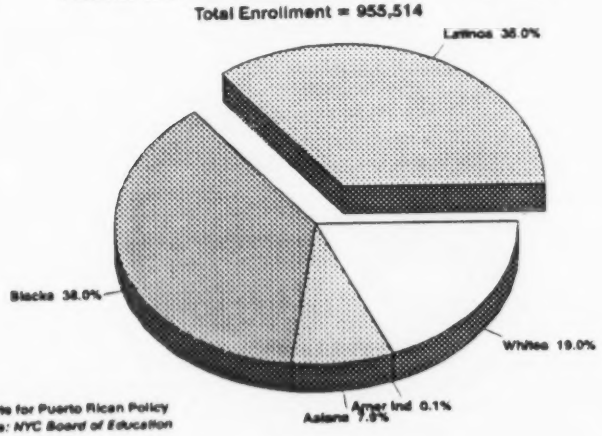
Metro Areas with Largest Numbers of Latino-Owned Firms, 1987



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Bureau of the Census

New York Public School Enrollment
Racial-Ethnic Breakdown, Oct. 31, 1990

Total Enrollment = 955,514

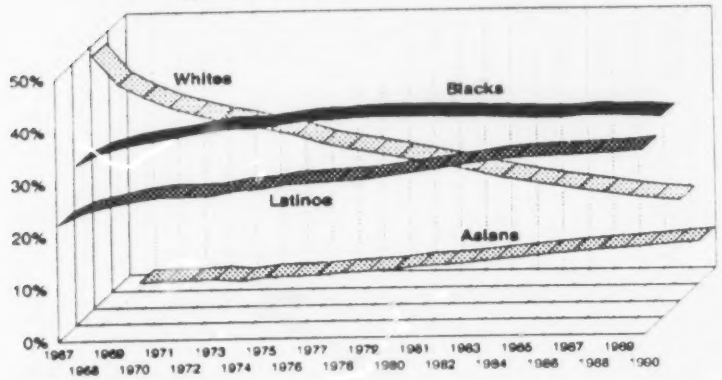


Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: NYC Board of Education

enrollment, Latinos were only 23% of those who graduated from high school. Of those persons 25 years of age and older, Puerto Ricans had the lowest proportion with a high school diploma: 45% in 1991, compared with 56% of other Latinos, 66% of Blacks and 72% of whites.

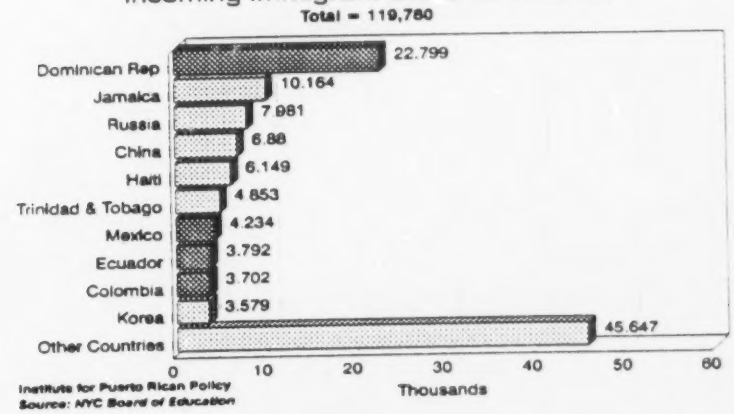
The biggest challenge facing Latinos in New York City is their high and persistent levels of poverty. In the 1980s, there were over 800,000 Latinos living in poverty in New York City, the largest group in this category throughout that decade. Of those, the largest number among Latinos are Puerto Rican: 509,127 in 1990 compared to 317,074 other Latinos. The Latino poverty rate is the highest of any group in the city: in 1990 it was 43% compared to 33% for blacks

New York City Public School Enrollments 1967-90
Changes in Racial-Ethnic Composition



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: NYC Board of Education

New York City Public Schools
Incoming Immigrant Students 1989-92

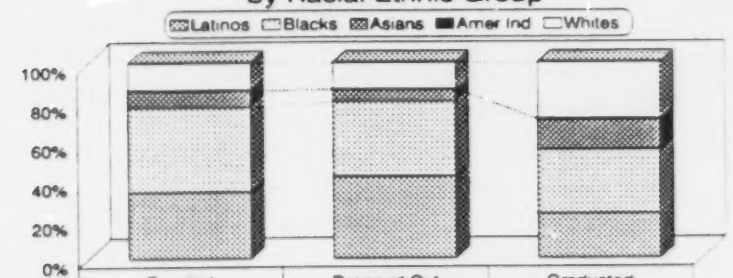


Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: NYC Board of Education

and 12% for whites. Among Latinos, Puerto Ricans exhibited a significantly higher poverty rate: 55% in 1990 compared to 32% for other Latinos. The result is that in 1990, Latinos made up 45% of all persons classified as living in poverty in New York City (Puerto Ricans 28% and other Latinos 17%), while blacks made up 32% and whites 20%.

In being able to respond to these problems at the national level, in the last few years a number of national Puerto Rican organizations have become more aggressive, particularly the National Puerto Rican Coalition (NPRC) and the Aspira National Association in Washington, D.C..

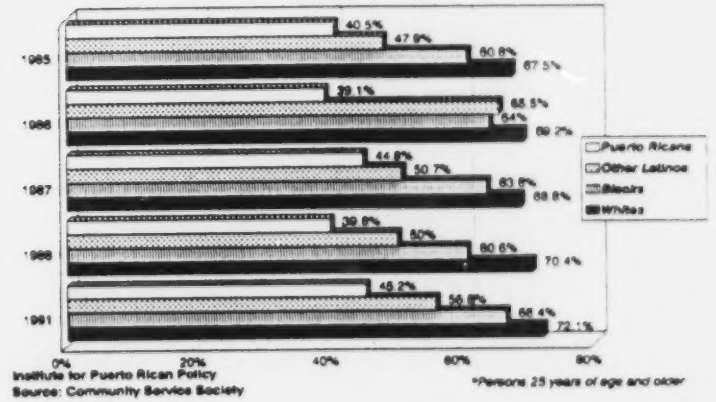
NYC High School Outcomes, 1991
by Racial-Ethnic Group



	Enrolled	Dropped Out	Graduated
Whites	13.8	13.7	28.9
Amer Ind	0.4	0.1	0.5
Asians	8.5	6.1	15.4
Blacks	43.4	38.6	32.7
Latinos	33.9	41.6	22.5

Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: NYC Board of Education

Percent of Persons* Who Completed High School
New York City, 1984-91, by Racial-Ethnic Group

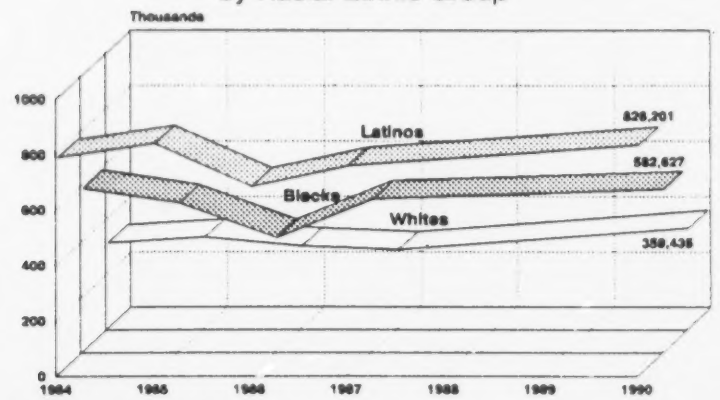


Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Community Service Society

*Persons 25 years of age and older

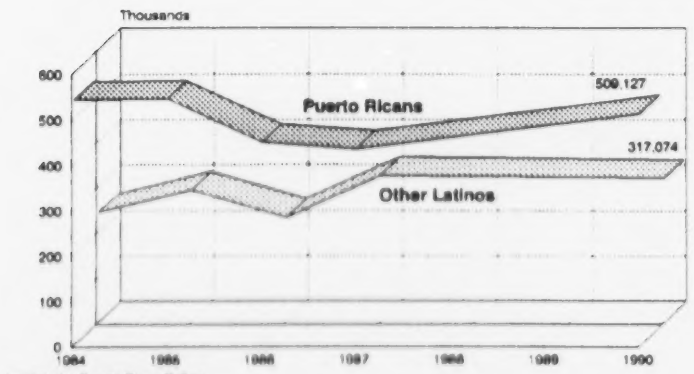
iEven organizations identified as Mexican-American, especially the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), have become more involved in attempting to address the Puerto Rican agenda. Institutions such as the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), with the collaboration of the Inter-University Program for Latino Research (IUP), have also taken on Puerto Rican-focused initiatives around the problem of poverty. There is also a small but consistent core of Puerto Rican and Puerto Rican-sensitive researchers beginning, as well, to focus on this issue that are developing institutions such as the IUP, the Puerto Rican Research Exchange and the newly-established Puerto Rican

Number of Poor in New York City 1984-90
by Racial-Ethnic Group



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Community Service Society

Number of Puerto Ricans vs. Other Latinos
in Poverty in New York City 1984-90



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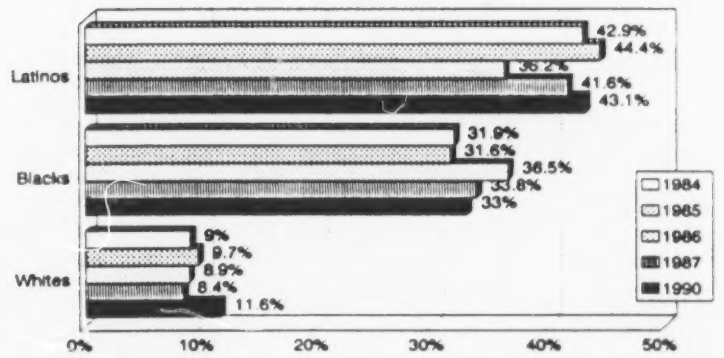
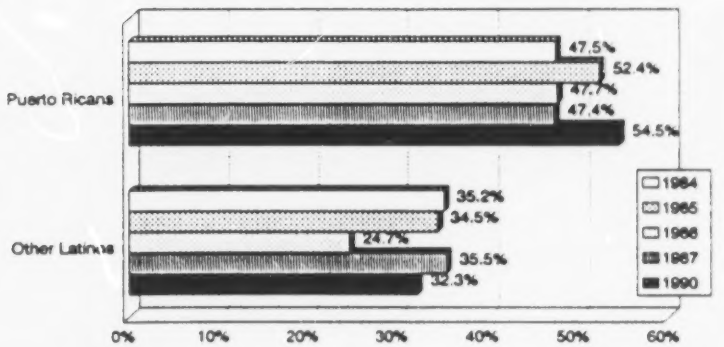
Source: Community Service Society

Poverty Rates in New York City 1984-90 by Racial-Ethnic Group



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Community Service Society

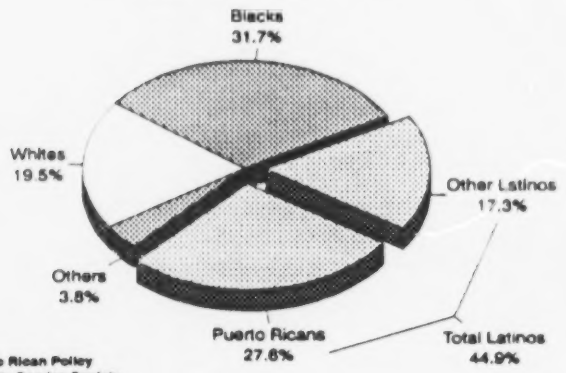
Poverty Rates for New York City, 1984-90 *Puerto Ricans vs. Other Latinos*



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Community Service Society

Racial-Ethnic Breakdown of Poor Persons in New York City, 1990

Total Poor = 1,838,545



Institute for Puerto Rican Policy
Source: Community Service Society

Studies Association (PRSA).

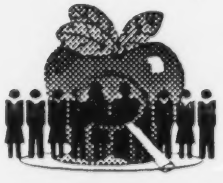
In New York City, which remains the city of the greatest Puerto Rican concentration in the United States, there were several interesting developments in this regard. Under the city's first African-American Mayor, the number of Puerto Rican appointed municipal officials in significant posts has grown, creating a potential core of city leaders larger than ever before. Through the City Council redistricting process in 1991, the number of Puerto Rican Councilmembers rose dramatically from three to eight, and in 1992, the number of Puerto Rican Congresspersons doubled from one to two and the number of State Senators from two to four. Simultaneously, the diversity of the city's Latino population has continued to intensify, resulting, for example, in the election of the first Dominican to a public body, the City Council. In addition, a Dominican Public Policy Project was established this year along with the initiation of a proposed Dominican Research Institute at the City University of New York. These are all developments that the IPR has actively encouraged at different levels.

However, Puerto Rican and other Latino communities remain at the margins of New York City's political, social and economic life. Policymakers continue to largely ignore the developmental needs of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos as a group. Both the public sector and philanthropy continue to underfund this community's institutions. And racial bias continues to plague this community's day to day reality. With the city's and state's fiscal crises, the need for the Puerto Rican/Latino community to develop its independent capacity to more effectively advocate for its needs is greater than ever. Through new institutions such as the Hispanic Federation of New York City, the new Latino Urban Policy Initiative (LUPI) at Lehman College and the newly-elected Latino legislators at the local, state and federal levels, the possibilities for more effective advocacy strategies are greatly enhanced, but not guaranteed.

The nature of Puerto Rican settlement in the United States and the experiences of the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy indicate that policy analysis and advocacy activities in this community need to be focused at the state and local levels.

Puerto Ricans, representing only about 1% of the country's population (excluding Puerto Rico), are concentrated in major urban centers in the Northeast and elsewhere such as New York City, Philadelphia, Newark, Boston, Hartford, Chicago and others. While most of the research on this community is conducted at the national level, a much greater focus is still needed at the local level. This must be done, in part, in recognition of where this community is concentrated as well as on the realities of the continuing "new federalism" of the Reagan years. One response to this reality was the creation of the Mauricio Gaston Institute at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, and the continuing and important role of local policy centers such as the Latino Institute in Chicago, among others. However, much more remains to be done, particularly in linking local efforts across the region for mutual support and growth.

These, in brief, are some of the formidable challenges that the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy and our fellow community institutions are confronting in the 1990s. Private philanthropy's role in assisting us to do so effectively and creatively can be an indispensible one.



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